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Message from the Mayor

It's that time of year again when we celebrate the spirit and legacy of civil rights and peace activist, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

On January 15, 1929, a young boy was born in Atlanta, Georgia. That young boy soon became a man who would play a major role in the history of our great country. He would reshape our nation's future and become a relentless leader and influence on our destiny.

Dr. Martin Luther King was born at a time when African-Americans—and all of America—needed him. During the years of segregation and Jim Crow, America displayed the very worst that mankind had to offer.

From 1955 to his assassination in 1968, Dr. King was able to expound, expose, and rescue America from many of those wrongs. He stood firm against injustice and armed himself with the wisdom and force of nonviolent protest. He sacrificed his life to sound the death knell for racial injustice!

Although his efforts brought about tremendous gains for African-Americans through federal legislation, his vision has in no way been completely fulfilled. It's horrifying that as we celebrate what would have been Dr. King's 76th birthday, 37 years after his death, we have still not yet achieved equality among people of all races.

Yes, we ride together, eat together, and play together, but we still struggle with King's "dream" and "view from the mountain top." We still struggle to return this nation to those great monuments of democracy carved by the founding fathers in the Declaration of Independence.

Like Dr. King, I also believe we will reach the "promised land" in this country. He gave us a road map that all of us could understand. He restored hope to a desperate world. And he transformed the lives of millions.

Dr. King reminded us that, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." He worked tirelessly to overcome injustice. Here in the District, we are still denied full justice and participation in the American democracy. That's why it's critical that we continue to make our voices heard in the halls of Congress and the halls of justice.

There are only three groups of people denied voting rights in our country: children, convicted felons and citizens of the District of Columbia.

Let us march on and hold true to the words of Dr. King when he said, "Stand up for justice against the monuments of opposition...move with dignity and peace."

And in Dr. King's spirit, let me remind our readers that Dr. King truly believed in the spirit of serving our fellow citizens. If you're interested in volunteering to help people who need assistance, call Greater DC Cares at (202) 777-4440 or 1 (800) VOLUNTEER or visit www.dc-cares.org.



Emancipation Day Bill Signing

On January 4, I officially signed the District of Columbia Emancipation Day Amendment Act of 2004, establishing District of Columbia Emancipation Day. This legislation will make April 16 a legal holiday in the District of Columbia.

At the signing, I recognized the hard work of Councilmember Vincent Orange (Ward 5) for leading the effort in the DC Council for this holiday.

On April 16, 1862, President Lincoln signed the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act, which ended slavery in the District of Columbia and freed more than 3,000 slaves in the District.

This act was actually passed nine months before President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. It was the first time that the government of the United States acted formally to abolish slavery and telegraphed the eventual end of slavery to the rest of country.

By signing this bill, I hope to make this day of remembrance a formal and permanent part of our civic culture and an appropriate celebration of those who sacrificed in fighting slavery.

It is important to remember, however, that for District residents, the process of full participation in government is not yet complete. I hope that the time we are setting aside to commemorate this day will, if nothing else, help to remind us that even now, our struggle is not yet over.

I am reminded of what Frederick Douglass once said, "Those who profess to love freedom and yet deprecate agitation are those who want crops without plowing. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

NFL, Redskins Fund Synthetic Field

I'm pleased to report that the field at our Department of Parks and Recreation's Benning Terrace site will receive a synthetic sports playing surface, thanks to a \$200,000 grant from the National Football League (NFL) Grassroots Program—a partnership between the NFL Youth Football Fund and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).

The new synthetic turf field, which will feature markings for football, soccer and lacrosse, will include a new irrigation system and safety improvements. These renovations will allow for year-round recreation programs and will be the centerpiece of a larger effort to develop the community of Benning Terrace.

The installation of an artificial turf at Benning Park will create the first "public" facility of its kind in the city. As many of our readers know, the Benning Terrace community has endured an escalation of juvenile crime, in many ways attributable to a lack of accessible, positive activities for kids. This field will serve as an anchor for sport activities for the community.

The DC Department of Parks and Recreation has committed to helping to fund the project and to be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the field.

The grant, administered by the DC Children Youth and Investment Trust Corporation, will be supported with contributions from a variety of sources including the DC Department of Parks and Recreation.

Let me again thank the NFL Youth Football Fund, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation and the Washington Redskins for their generosity and commitment to the District of Columbia. Beyond my sincere thanks, though, are congratulations to these organizations for working together to identify an area of great need for our children in the Benning Terrace community.

Other communities receiving NFL awards during this funding round are: Brookline, MA; Buffalo; Chicago; Cleveland; Detroit; Houston; Indianapolis; Jacksonville, FL; Nashville; Queens, NY; San Francisco; Seattle; St. Petersburg, FL; and Trenton, NJ.

Football fields will be built or significantly renovated with such improvements as the installation of new irrigation systems, lights, bleachers, scoreboards and goal posts.



Mayor's Arts Awards

The District's finest artists and arts organizations received accolades and applause from their peers and supporters at the 20th Annual Mayor's Arts Awards at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on January 10. The event was presented by the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities and hosted by Mrs. Virginia Williams (my mother) and NBC-4 news anchor Jim Vance.

Our city consistently attracts world-class performing artists. Those talented artists enhance the quality of our life, and they are an inspiration to aspiring young performers. It's important that our entire city congratulate all the winners and we should all thank them for the spirit of creativity that they bring to our city.

At the awards ceremony, the city presented Leonard Slatkin, music director of the National Symphony Orchestra, with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his imaginative programming, commitment to arts education and support for American music and musicians. Two special awards also recognized the Honorable Harold Brazil, former DC Councilmember, and Dr. J. Reilly Lewis, music director of the Cathedral Choral Society at the Washington National Cathedral, for their commitment to arts and culture.

Individual and organizational winners this year were:

- Excellence in an Artistic Discipline:
 - Dana Tai Soon Burgess & Company (contemporary dance)
 - Washington Ballet Company
- Outstanding Contribution to Arts Education
 - DC Arts & Humanities Education Collaborative
- Outstanding Emerging Artist
 - Nejla Yatkin (dancer/choreographer)
- Excellence in Service to the Arts
 - Northeast Performing Arts Group (arts education program)
- Special Recognition Awards:
 - Honorable Harold Brazil
 - Dr. J. Reilly Lewis
- Lifetime Achievement Award
 - Leonard Slatkin, Music Director, National Symphony Orchestra
- Superintendent's Arts Teacher Award
 - Karen Daniels, Fillmore Arts Center
 - Udoh Opiotennione, Oak Hill Academy

Update on the District's Flu Plan—Our City Is Getting Serious about the Flu

DC Department of Health (DOH) Director Gregg A. Pane, MD, recently announced an update of the District's flu plan. This update includes the expansion of the priority groups for flu vaccination, the availability of vaccines for purchase through DOH, and flu clinics for District residents in the priority groups.

Last month, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) expanded the recommended list of flu vaccine priority groups. Flu vaccine is recommended for people in the following priority groups:

- All children aged 6 – 23 months
- Adults aged 65 years and older
- Persons aged 2 – 64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions
- All women who will be pregnant during the influenza season
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- Children aged 2 – 18 years on chronic aspirin therapy
- Health-care workers involved in direct patient care, and
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged less than 6 months.

Where supply is sufficient, flu vaccine also is recommended for persons in the following additional priority groups:

- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of persons in high-risk groups (e.g., persons aged 65 and older; persons with chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart or lung disease, or weakened immune systems because of illness or medication; and children aged less than 2 years) and
- All adults aged 50 – 64 years.

On December 17, 2004, DOH lifted its flu vaccine emergency rule that was adopted on October 14, 2004. The rule prohibited health care providers from dispensing flu vaccine to anyone other than those in the designated priority groups.

Continued



Update on the District's Flu Plan—Our City Is Getting Serious about the Flu, (Cont.)

Since the onset of the flu season, our primary focus has been to ensure that all available vaccine in the District be distributed to individuals in the CDC priority groups. Now, we are very confident that the District's supply of flu vaccine has been fairly distributed to those who need it most.

Doctors can now administer the vaccine to individuals in the expanded priority group as long as the demand from their high-risk/high-priority patients has been met first.

Health care professionals and/or health care institutions interested in purchasing additional flu vaccine should contact the DOH Immunization Program immediately at (202) 576-7130 ext. 33.

The flu season occurs between October and April, with the peak traditionally occurring in January and February. Currently, the District's flu activity level was recently raised from "sporadic" to "local." The District's first flu case was reported on November 1, 2004. DOH also recommends that seniors and people with chronic health problems receive pneumococcal vaccine as directed by their health care provider.

For additional information about this topic or other health issues, please contact DOH at (202) 671-5000 or visit www.dchealth.dc.gov.

District Activities



At the 20th annual citywide observance of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Mayor Williams' Chief of Staff Alfreda Davis and Rev. Walter Fauntroy, honored Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton with the "Living the Dream" Award.



Mayor Williams announces new appointments during his weekly news briefing January 19.



Homeland Security Advisor Tom Ridge meets with District and other officials in preparation for the upcoming presidential Inauguration.



Mayor Williams attends National League of Cities Inaugural reception.



Inaugural parade passes in front of the John A. Wilson Building.



Community News

- [Mayor Announces New Appointees](#)
- [Attorney General's Office Launches Sweeping Changes to City's Child Support Services Division](#)
- [New Parks and Recreation Master Plan to Map Out Future for 1,000 Acres of Park Land](#)

[View All News Releases](#)

Upcoming Events

1/25	DC Comprehensive Plan Community Workshops (4 Locations) 6 pm – 9 pm 8 am – 1 pm (Shaw Junior High only) McKinley Technology High School 115 T Street, NE
1/26	Buses P6, 80; Rhode Island Avenue (red line) Paul Public Charter School 5800 8th Street, NW
1/27	Buses 70, 62, E2, E3, E4 Ballou Senior High School 3401 4th Street, SE
1/29	Buses A2, M8; Congress Heights Station (green line) Shaw Junior High School 925 Rhode Island Avenue, NW Buses G8, 70; Shaw-Howard University (green line) Pre-register at: www.inclusivecity.org Contact: (202) 442-8812
1/29	District of Columbia Public Schools' Sixth Annual Showcase of Schools 10 am – 2 pm Washington Convention Center 801 Mount Vernon Place NW Hall A Contact: Leonie Campbell (202) 368-9807
1/31	100% Design Community Meeting at Anacostia Neighborhood Library 7 pm – 8:15 pm Anacostia Neighborhood Library 1800 Good Hope Road SE Contact: Jeff Bonvechio (jeff.bonvechio@dc.gov) (202) 442-6070

